DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 446 648 HE 033 500

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TITLE	International Higher Education: ERIC Trends, 1999-2000.
INSTITUTION	ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education, Washington, DC.; George Washington Univ., Washington, DC. Graduate School of Education and Human Development.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	2000-00-00
NOTE	11p.
AVAILABLE FROM	For full text: http://www.eriche.org.
PUB TYPE	ERIC Publications (071)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Colleges; *Cross Cultural Studies; Foreign Countries; *Higher Education; *International Education; International Studies; Literature Reviews; Scholarly Journals

ABSTRACT

The literature about international issues in higher education has increased over the last decade. In recent years there has been a particular emphasis on cross-cultural comparisons of common concerns, as evidenced by the growing number of journals that focus on international education. The new knowledge-based economy has resulted in a move toward utilitarian views of higher education in which economic values are emphasized and fiscal resources are the true measure of value. This change in values requires balancing the focus of economic growth with the traditional functions of universities. Several other trends notable in the literature about international higher education are seen in the interest expressed in: (1) bureaucratization; (2) accountability; (3) quality; (4) access; (5) redefining higher education; (6) globalization; and (7) lifelong learning and continuing education. Higher education is a priority in every country. Accountability and quality movements have been going on for years in some countries, and these countries can offer assistance to others. Entrepreneurialism is a growing model, and the impact of the shift in this direction needs further exploration, especially since so many commentators advocate this model. (Contains 21 references.) (SLD)

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ERIC TRENDS 1999-2000:

INTERNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION

by Adrianna J. Kezar

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What are ERIC Trends?

Educational Research Information Center (ERIC) Trends are analyses of higher education literature contained in the ERIC Database. These analyses describe major concerns in institutional practice, helping researchers identify new areas for research, areas where further understanding is needed, and any gaps in the literature. For practitioners, ERIC Trends place individual institutional shifts in practice into a larger context. They provide individual institutions with examples of other institutions that are trying to make the same changes and help institutions identify other areas they should consider for change.

Slightly more than half of the literature summarized in ERIC Trends is drawn from higher education journals. The remainder of the literature summarized includes conference papers and documents published by educational associations, institutional research offices, research centers, consortia, and state and federal associations and boards. The literature is produced by both the research and practice communities. It is a combination of current theory and research, such as conference papers and Internet documents, and more dated literature, such as books and journal articles, which take several years to evolve from acceptance to publication. A limitation of this analysis is that it relies on the literature ERIC is able to obtain from authors and organizations; some groups may be unwilling to share information and, therefore, are not represented in the analysis. The range of documents analyzed in the ERIC Trends is fairly comprehensive, however.

To retrieve the literature for analysis, all of the higher education literature in the ERIC database was searched by the ERIC descriptors that reflect the most important topics in higher education: college faculty; college students (including foreign students); finance; college instruction (including academic advising); curriculum; program evaluation; policy and governance; legal issues; professional development; college administration (including educational facilities); higher education and the public good; and professional and graduate education. A quantitative analysis compared the current number of documents within a particular category to earlier years (back to 1986). A qualitative analysis of content was conducted on ERIC abstracts to identify recurring themes.

Higher Education Trends (1999-2000): International Higher Education

by Adrianna J. Kezar

Literature about international issues in higher education has increased over the last decade. In the last few years, there has been a particular emphasis on cross-cultural comparison of common concerns, such as accountability, quality, performance, and economic development. The increased importance of this literature is illustrated by the development of International Higher Education, a newsletter from Boston College that focuses on international higher education issues. In addition, there is a steadily increasing number of international journals that focus on higher education: *Australian Journal of Education, Australian Universities' Review, Higher Education in Europe, Higher Education Management, Higher Education Policy: Quarterly Journal of the International Association of Universities, International Journal of Educational Management Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management, South African Journal of Higher Education*, to name a few. Certain countries are well represented in the literature including Europe, Canada, and Australia. Mexico and Asian and South American countries are becoming more prominent in the literature. But many areas remain largely undescribed or unresearched, including African countries outside South Africa, the Middle East, Central America, and Oceania.

As higher education has developed into a foundational component of national economic growth, it has become even more central to societies throughout the world (Hobbs, J.). This new knowledge-based economy has resulted in a move away from church oriented or communitarian views of education to utilitarian views of higher education in which economic values are emphasized and fiscal resources are the true measure of value. This change in values which requires balancing the forces of economic growth with the traditional functions of universities is a worldwide concern. Various countries struggle with competing values and priorities much as corporate and academic values compete against each other in the U.S. (See the ERIC Trends in Administration). Examining possible solutions to this complex dilemma has risen as a priority in the literature. Many developing countries do not yet face this struggle in values as higher education has evolved only recently with increased economic development in those countries.

Several other trends are notable in the literature about international higher education:

1. Bureaucratization
2. Accountability
3. Quality
4. Access
5. Redefining higher education
6. Globalization
7. Life-long learning/continuing education/certification.

Researchers are struggling to study the impact of trends in these areas on future efforts. Most of the international literature tends to focus on policy concerns that can be compared across countries-- concerns that focus on access or accountability. There is also a growing body of

literature on management techniques and approaches.

Bureaucratization

As noted in the ERIC Trends in Administration and Governance & Policy, higher education's continued bureaucratization and the influence of corporate culture are concerns in countries around the world. One study examines characteristics of the emerging systems of corporate management in Australian universities and their effects on academic and administrative practices. Case studies were conducted at 17 individual institutions of various types. The Australian government has led the change to a performance-based competitive system with a single, standardized system of funding, funds distribution, and measurement of research activity. Study findings are organized under five broad headings: (1) the emergence of a new kind of strategic leader; (2) the eclipse of collegial systems of decision making and the rise of management- controlled "post-collegial" mechanisms for decision making and consultation; (3) changes in research management, with consequent effects on academic work; (4) commonalities and variations in the different New Universities; and (5) changes in universities in the context of developments in public management. Overall, the study finds more corporate-style university management emerging in all institutions. Also noted was a research system that was creating perverse incentives in academe, such as the primacy of money income for research, the primacy of research quantity over quality, and the tendency to "flatten out" distinctions among the disciplines for administrative purposes (Marginson, S.). Initial studies of bureaucratization show some alarming and disturbing impacts that need further analysis, refinement, and dissemination among education professionals and policymakers.

Accountability

Probably the most prevalent trend in the international higher education literature is the drive to develop accountability processes; this relates to the trend toward bureaucratization already noted. One paper examined the trend toward demanding increased accountability and efficiency by institutions of higher education in the United States and Europe and the resulting implications for the relationship between government and the college or university. It noted that factors such as limited state resources, rising educational costs, and a growing demand for accessibility and equity have generated external pressures on higher education to become more accountable to its funding sources. Specific reforms in the United States were mentioned, including performance-based funding, adjustments in faculty workload policies, and development of policies related to time-to-degree and faculty-per-degree ratios. In Great Britain, the British Education Reform Act of 1988 began the transition of power from local education authorities to the national government. Examples of the accountability trend from continental Europe were also provided. Discussion about societal demands and the accountability movement shows their effects on higher education massification and resulting limits on public expenditures (Alexander, F. K.).

One article described examples of accountability measures that included policies, commissioning bodies, methods, and criteria for both internal and external evaluation of research at universities in eight countries (Finland, Portugal, United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, Norway, Spain, France). The article also examined the effects of evaluations on finance, structure, and research problems (Boffo, S., Chave, D., Kaukonen, E., & Opdal, L. R.). These comparisons help countries evaluate

models' strengths and weaknesses when used in different systems. Obviously, structures and processes respond differently in various environments.

Many countries are struggling to find an appropriate balance between professional autonomy and accountability (Harman, Grant). One study examined efforts in the United States, Germany, and Switzerland (Terhart, E.). A heavy emphasis on accountability was found in countries where faculty have less power and autonomy, creating a potential imbalanced environment. The impact of limited professional autonomy is not fully understood. In the United States, there has been great concern over the move away from professional standards for teachers and the decline this might have caused in American public schools. This trend needs greater analysis, especially given the trend toward expansion of higher education with limited funding. National priorities need more examination; economic analysis and modeling might support greater allocation of funds to higher education.

Quality

One interesting example of quality assurance is Mexico's quality-oriented higher education policies, in place since 1984 and designed to encourage improved faculty performance through economic incentives. The policies were enhanced further in the mid-1990s by establishing medium-term improvement strategies and using external evaluators and international experience to promote change (Zorilla, J. F.). Quality or performance experiments have been more successful within professoriates with relatively weak professional authority and less autonomy. Others argue that there is little rationale behind current methods of assessing higher education quality because there is little exploration of what constitutes quality. Despite good intentions, quality monitoring has become overly bureaucratic, and potential for significant change is hampered by an inappropriate focus on accountability, not improvement (Harvey, L.). The notion of quality, although problematic, remains an active area of debate in the literature on international higher education. Assessment is also a major theme in discussions of quality; the emphasis is on summative (accountability) rather than formative (improvement) assessment, similar to the quality literature.

The growth in distance education and lifelong learning, described later in this trend analysis, has also led to a worldwide search for defining quality in distance education (Banta, T.). The distance education environment provides fewer assurances for quality than traditional avenues, e.g., departmental processes and procedures, peer review, and few existing model policies/programs (Daniel, J., Leavitt, M., & Romer, R.). This will continue to be an area needing research and policy work for years to come.

Access

One of the most prevalent topics in international discussions of higher education is strategies or approaches for expanding access successfully (DeBie, M., Derks, B., & Suijer, F. (Eds.)). Almost every country is expanding access, yet there are many different issues to consider: Should tuition be charged in countries that have long offered higher education for free? What should admissions standards be? How might the curriculum be altered to meet vocational needs? Many key issues surrounding access are actively being debated in the literature. In addition,

articles review case studies of expansion, examining factors that were successful as well as barriers, constraints, or problems in access expansion. Higher education in China has expanded rapidly in recent years, with the number of colleges and universities more than doubling between 1977 and 1995 and enrollment increasing by a factor of five. According to the Ninth Five-Year-Plan for Educational Development and the Long Range Development Program Toward the Year 2010, enrollment is expected to increase from 2.57 million students in 1995 to 4.5 million in 2010 (Kong, X., & Gimmestad, M. J.) These types of record expansions need more study. The implications for these societies as well as worldwide implications are not well understood.

Financial considerations remain in the forefront of access discussions. Some countries have overextended themselves, later trying to handle tremendous budget shortfalls and creating instability. It is important to develop an understanding of the successful models of academic expansion.

Redefining Higher Education

As higher education becomes more closely aligned with economic concerns and access continues to increase, the concept of higher education is being redefined Although definitions of higher education have been in flux since the beginning of colleges and universities over 500 years ago, ideas about the purpose of the university are changing much more rapidly now. This is especially true in countries that have not undergone the change in definition that occurred in the U.S. over the last 100 years (Rizvi, F., & Walsh, L.). One study in recent literature examined the appropriateness of the concept of "key skills" in higher education in the United Kingdom, as defined by the 1997 Dearing Commission report, and the processes required to achieve this ideal in the current higher education environment. The report distinguished between high-level intellectual skills and the key skills of communication, numeracy, and capability in communications and information technology (Blass, E.). As noted in this paper's section on access, the character of higher education is changing in many countries. The U.S. serves as a model for the expansion and redefinition of higher education occurring in many countries.

In the ERIC Trends in External Relationships, the increasing demand of society on higher education institutions is observed; this same trend is mirrored in the literature on international higher education. Several reports analyzed changes in the relationship between universities and society and in government attitudes toward higher education institutions, and explored different institutional reactions to the greater demands of society, e.g., intervention in schools and linkages with business. One article introduced the concept of the entrepreneurial university based on recent theory and institutional quality audits in Europe (Soares, V. A. M., & Amaral, A. M. S. C.).

Some researchers have begun to classify and describe the changes happening worldwide, developing a taxonomy of the structures and missions of higher education institutions around the world. Institutional models discussed include sole-purpose institutions, dual-mode institutions (providing both campus-based and distance instruction), consortia, and various administrative models. The models highlight the development of a complex educational mosaic creating a worldwide higher education enterprise. Although some researchers described the growing

diversity of institutions, others worried that higher education is becoming more homogenous as it globalizes. Some have suggested that dominant models such as European and U.S. models are replacing traditional structures and academic communities. Within this complex mosaic, many institutions are trying to find their place, hence the trend of globalization -- competition or cooperation.

Globalization: Competition or cooperation

There are concerns about higher education's ability to continue to be a cooperative venture within the new global marketplace. Institutions are forming alliances; others are aggressively seeking new markets in areas that directly compete with institutions that they were never in competition with before (Howard-Vital, M. R., & Rosenkoetter, M.). The advent of distance education makes a student a consumer, anywhere in the world. Some institutions are reconsidering notions of cooperative arrangements and are thinking about strategic alliances (Saffu, K., & Mamman, A.). Others describe their disappointment with the new environment that changes the traditional value system of the academy of collaboration. One article outlined a model of factors critical to establishing and maintaining sustainable competitive advantage for education services enterprises in international markets. The model, which combines industrial economics, management theory, and services marketing, seeks to explain the strategic decision-making environment in which the education exporter operates and the outcome is ideal to achieving a competitive advantage (Mazzarol, T., & Soutar, G. N.). Much of the literature about the global marketplace is emerging from the business world; there needs to be an accompanying educational globalization perspective. For example, what will be the effect of educational alliances? Will some educational sectors suffer more than others? What will the impact of alliances be on students or learning?

Lifelong Learning

The concerns about access, vocational needs of society, competition, and technology are linked to the theme of lifelong learning. Many countries describe the need to retrain workers within the new global economy. Universities worldwide are trying to devote more time and resources to continuing education/training (Daniel, J., Leavitt, M., & Romer, R.). This shift in emphasis on lifelong learning will lead to transfer of certain specializations from undergraduate to continuing education, making cooperative links with business and industry a cornerstone of higher education. Many countries are trying to determine the services needed for nontraditional students (Uebersfeld, J.). The continuing education field and lifelong learning is an area that most higher education researchers have examined minimally. Educators look to human development and business literature for ideas on how to further develop this area of education. However, this will most likely continue the trend of corporate values and bureaucratization that educators fear. But until educators develop models and research in these areas, professionals will need to look outside academe for ideas about the future of lifelong learning and continuing education. Technology is a concern worldwide, but is similar to other areas of higher education research (administration, governance, policy, etc.) in that there is advocacy literature, but minimal research data (Daniel, J., Leavitt, M., & Romer, R.).

Conclusion

Higher education is a priority of every country in the world. Accountability and quality movements have had years of experimentation in some countries, such as those of the United Kingdom, with the results offering strategic assistance to other countries. The United States can serve as a model for access and lifelong learning. Countries need to utilize their collective expertise to increase the world's potential for solving the problems that plague all of us, whether environmental, medical, or social. Entrepreneurialism is a growing model; entrepreneurialism and an increase in strategic alliances may lead to less sharing of models and more competition, ending the open, sharing environment that often leads to development for all. The impact of the shift toward entrepreneurialism needs further exploration over the next decade, especially since so many commentators are advocating this model.

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